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The **UNEXPECTED**



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THE UNEXPECTED

THE SPECTACULAR SUCCESS OF SPECIAL MISSIONS IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR WAS FIRST AND FOREMOST THE RESULT OF THE COURAGE AND ENTERPRISE OF THE MEN TAKING PART. BUT ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTORS IN THE SUCCESS OF SUCH MISSIONS WAS THE CAREFUL PLANNING AND MINUTE CHECKING THAT HAD BECOME THE CHIEF FUNCTION OF BRITISH ARMY INTELLIGENCE . . .



THIS EFFICIENT SYSTEM OF SIFTING FACTS HAD BEEN THE RESPONSIBILITY OF ONE MAN — COLONEL HENRY BRAYBROOKE. DURING THE EARLY STAGES OF THE LIBYAN CAMPAIGN, HE HAD LEARNED THE VALUE OF DETAIL FROM ONE OF THE COMMANDOS MOST DANGEROUS ASSIGNMENTS — OPERATION TASKMASTER!

Chapter 1. *Back from the Dead*

EARLY IN 1941, THE ALLIED FORCES WERE FALLING BACK UNDER THE OVERWHELMING MIGHT OF ROMMEL'S PANZERS. THROUGH THE DUSTY STREETS OF CAIRO, A BRITISH ARMY LORRY GROUND ITS WAY—UNTIL IT REACHED AN UNOBTUSIVE WHITEWASHED GATEWAY... THE HEADQUARTERS OF ARMY INTELLIGENCE.



CAPTAIN PHILIP STANTON WAS TAKEN STRAIGHT TO THE OFFICE OF COLONEL BRAYBROOKE.

PLEASE GO STRAIGHT IN, SIR. THE COLONEL IS WAITING FOR YOU!

THANK YOU, LIEUTENANT!



COLONEL BRAYBROOKE HAD THE INSCRUTABLE FEATURES OF A MAN WHOSE EXPRESSIONS NEVER REVEALED HIS THOUGHTS. HE SPOKE IN SHORT, CLIPPED, DIRECT SENTENCES THAT CUT SHORT ANY ARGUMENT.

I HAVE YOUR REPORT, CAPTAIN. SOME POINTS NEED FURTHER EXPLANATION. SIT DOWN AND GIVE ME THE FULL STORY...

CAPTAIN STANTON REPORTING, SIR.

A LITTLE TAKEN ABACK BY THE COLONEL'S ABRUPT ATTITUDE, THE CAPTAIN SAT WARILY IN THE CHAIR AND SEARCHED BACK THROUGH HIS MEMORY...

WELL, SIR - AFTER I ESCAPED I...

YOUR REGIMENT WAS OVERRUN WHILE HOLDING THE LINE TWELVE MILES EAST OF GAZALA AERODROME! TAKE IT FROM THERE...

AND SO THE CAPTAIN TOOK UP THE STORY OF THE GRUELLING ACTION IN WHICH A CRACK REGIMENT HAD BEEN WIPED OUT IN AN ATTEMPT TO CHECK THE FLOW OF ROMMEL'S ARMOUR TOWARDS TOBRUK.

I WAS 'B' COMPANY COMMANDER, IN A FORWARD SECTOR OF THE LINE. OUR CASUALTIES HAD BEEN HEAVY AND WE WERE RUNNING LOW ON AMMUNITION WHEN THE GERMAN TANKS HIT US...



THE SITUATION WAS TENSE. AFTER CHASING THE ITALIANS BACK ACROSS THE DESERT, THE WEARY BRITISH ARMY HAD RUN INTO THE WALL OF ROMMEL'S HEAVILY MECHANISED FORCES.

HERE THEY COME AGAIN, SERGEANT! HOLD THEM OFF AT ALL COSTS!

WE'RE RUNNING SHORT OF AMMO, SIR - I'VE JUST ISSUED THE LAST OF OUR RESERVES!



ACROSS THE BURNING SANDS CAME THE THICKLY ARMoured MONSTERS OF ROMMEL'S PANZERS — THE MARK IV TANKS . . .



UNDER-STRENGTH AND SHORT OF AMMUNITION, THE BRITISH WERE HARD-PUSHED, BUT DOGGEDLY HELD THEIR GROUND.

YOU'VE ABOUT THREE MAGS LEFT, DUSTY—AND THAT'S ALL!

WE CAN'T HANG ON MUCH LONGER. THERE SEEMS TO BE NO END TO THESE JERRIES!



The Unexpected

THEIR HEAVY STEEL GIVING THEM FULL PROTECTION AGAINST ANYTHING THE BRITISH HAD LEFT TO THROW AT THEM, THE MARK IV PANZERS RUMBLLED TOWARDS THEIR LINES, GUNS SPRAYING A MURDEROUS STREAM OF LEAD.

LET THE TANKS GO THROUGH! YOU CAN'T STOP THEM! SAVE YOUR AMMO FOR THE INFANTRY.

HERE THEY COME NOW, SIR - HORDES OF THE PERISHERS!

IN THE WAKE OF THE TANKS, WAVE AFTER WAVE OF TOUGH AFRIKA KORPS TROOPS SWEEPED DOWN ON THE WEAKENED DEFENDERS.

COME ON, LADS! FIX BAYONETS!

THAT'S YOUR LAST MAG, DUSTY! FROM NOW ON IT'S COLD STEEL!



BUT DETERMINATION AND COURAGE WERE NOT ENOUGH! THE BRITISH WERE SWAMPED UNDER SHEER WEIGHT OF NUMBERS. STANTON GRABBED AT THE BLADE OF A GERMAN BAYONET TO AVOID ITS MURDEROUS THRUST.

NO YOU DON'T, FRITZ — YOU WON'T GET ME THAT EASY!

AAAGH!



BUT THE OFFICER WAS NOT PREPARED FOR THE SWINGS OF THE HEAVY BUTT, AS THE RIFLE PIVOTED IN THE GERMAN'S HANDS...

TAKE THAT ENGLANDER!

AAAGH!?



COLONEL BRAYBROOKE
EASED HIMSELF MORE
COMFORTABLY INTO HIS
CHAIR AS STANTON
CONTINUED . . .

HOW LONG I WAS UNCONSCIOUS
I HAVE NO IDEA . BUT WHEN
I EVENTUALLY CAME ROUND THE
FIGHT WAS OVER . . .



OOOH . . . MY HEAD . . . WHERE
ARE THE OTHERS ?

EASY, MY FRIEND—
YOU HAVE TAKEN A
NASTY BLOW!



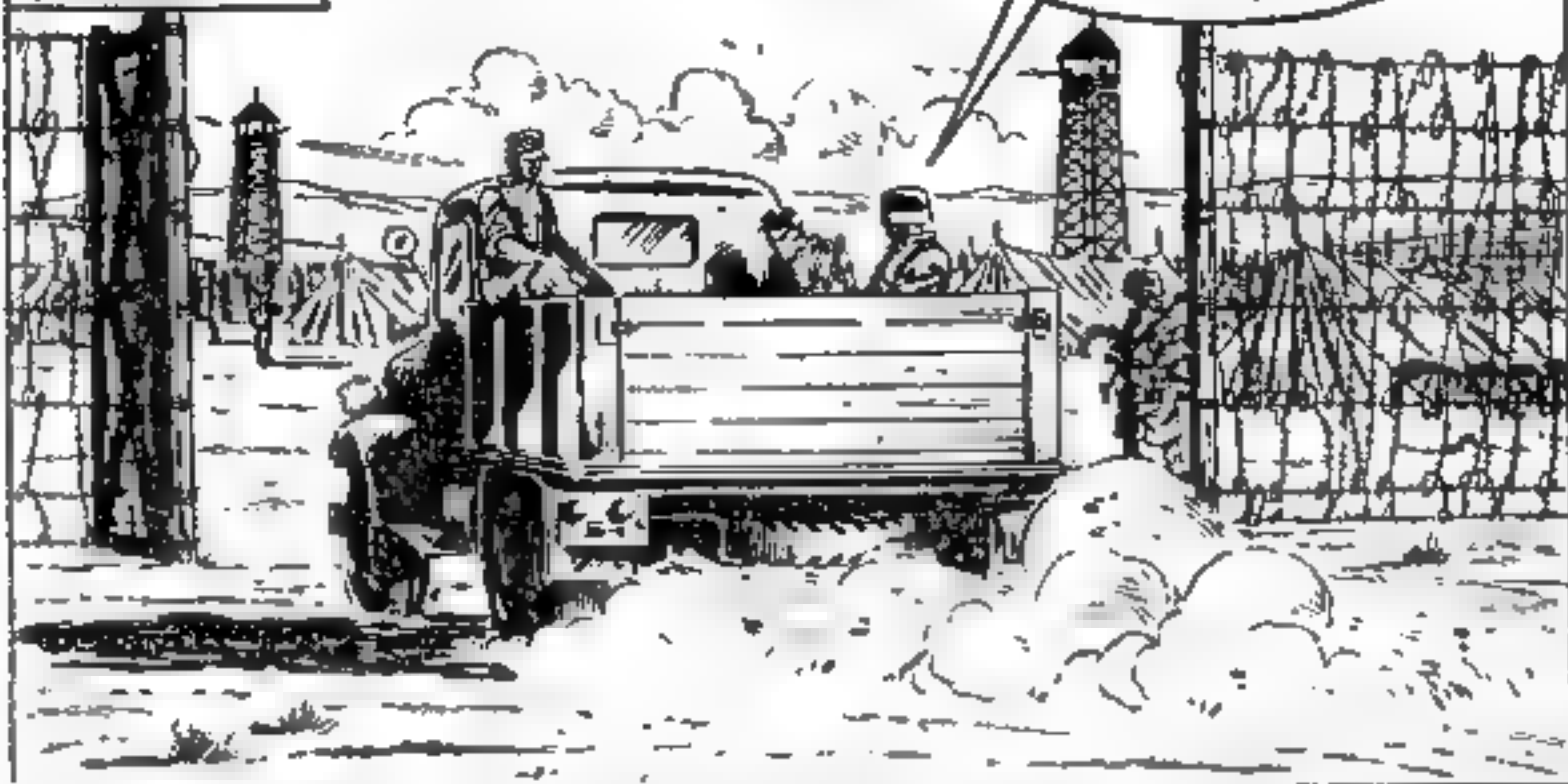
BUT THE OTHER MEN . . .
WHAT HAPPENED
TO THEM ?

THEY ARE
DEAD! YOU
ARE OUR ONLY
PRISONER!



AN HOUR LATER, STANTON SAT MISERABLY IN THE BACK OF A LURCHING GERMAN LORRY AS IT SWUNG THROUGH THE GATES OF THE PRISON COMPOUND . . .

THINK YOURSELF FORTUNATE, ENGLANDER FOR YOU THE WAR IS OVER!



LIGHTING ANOTHER CIGARETTE, STANTON CONTINUED HIS STORY . . .

FOR SOME TIME I JUST SAT AROUND. THE PROSPECT OF A LENGTHY STAY IN THE CAMP WAS BEGINNING TO GET ME DOWN, UNTIL ONE DAY AN OPPORTUNITY CAME MY WAY . . .



FROM HIS TENT, STANTON WATCHED AS THE ARAB REFUSE COLLECTOR WAS GRUDGINGLY ADMITTED TO THE GERMAN CAMP.

IT'S ONLY THAT OLD FOOL ACHMED, KURT! YOU'D BETTER GO WITH HIM TO THE MESSING TENT!

JA!



STANTON KEPT UP HIS VIGIL AS THE WIZENED OLD ARAB SHUFFLED BACK AND FORTH WITH THE KITCHEN GARBAGE, THE GERMAN GUARD PAID NO ATTENTION...

THAT OLD ROGUE DOESN'T NEED WATCHING! I COULD HAVE A QUICK SMOKE BEFORE HE'S FINISHED!



SILHOUETTED AGAINST THE BLUE SKY, FURTIVE WISPS OF SMOKE CURLED UP INTO THE STILL AIR FROM THE SENTRY'S CIGARETTE...

HAVING A CRAFTY FAG, EH? THIS IS THE CHANCE I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR...



NO-ONE NOTICED AS STANTON CREPT STEALTHILY ROUND BEHIND THE GUARD. THEN...

AAAGH...!



SAUNTERING UP TO THE WAITING CART WITH A DECEPTIVE AIR OF CASUALNESS, STANTON CAST A QUICK LOOK ROUND— THEN LEAPT ON TO THE CART AND SLID DOWN IN BETWEEN THE SWILL-BINS.

I WILL BE HERE AGAIN TOMORROW, EFFENDI.

ALL RIGHT, OLD MAN! ON YOUR WAY!



SLOWLY, THE SMELLY CART RUMBLED TO THE GATE. EVERY MUSCLE TENSE, STANTON HELD HIS BREATH, EXPECTING AT ANY MOMENT TO FEEL THE MUZZLE OF A RIFLE PRODDING HIS BACK . . .

PHREW! CLEAR OFF WITH YOUR STINKING LOAD OF RUBBISH, YOU MISERABLE BAG-OF-BONES!



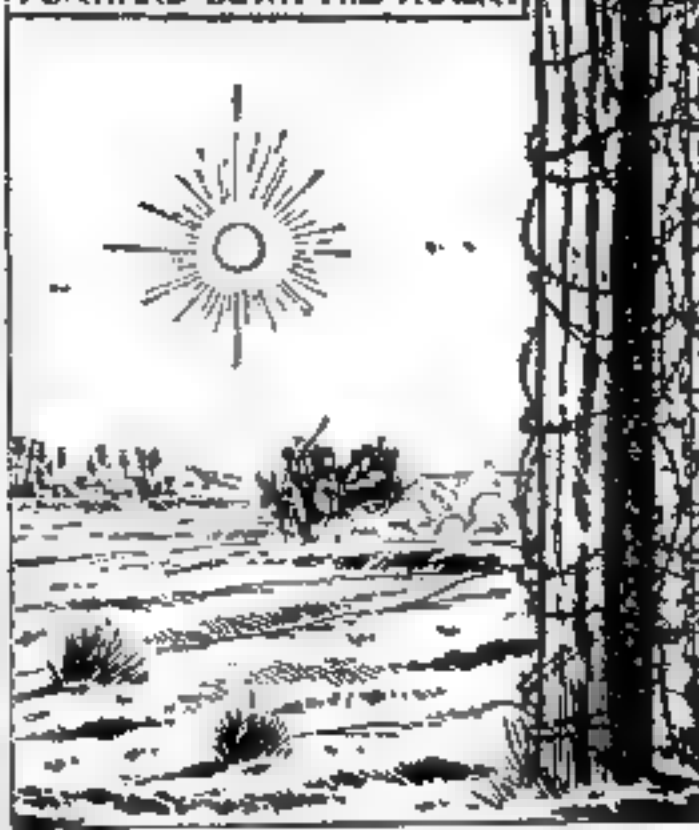
WITH A HEFTY SLAP ON THE DONKEY'S RUMP, THE GUARD STOOD TO ONE SIDE AS THE CART RUMBLED SLOWLY FORWARD AGAIN . . .

ALL RIGHT, SCHMIDT! -HE CAN GO!

JAWOHL!



GOADED TO GREATER EFFORT BY THE ARAB'S STAFF, THE UNWILLING ANIMAL TROTTED FORWARD DOWN THE TRACK.



THE CART PULLED INTO AN ARAB VILLAGE. IN A FLASH, STANTON HAD LEAPT FROM HIS HIDING PLACE . . .

I MUST GET AWAY FROM HERE BEFORE THEY SEND OUT SEARCH-PARTIES . . .



SOME SIXTH SENSE HELD HIM BACK IN THE COVER OF A HOLGE. INTO THE VILLAGE CAME A CONVOY OF GERMAN TRUCKS . . .

OUT OF THE WAY, DOG—UNLESS YOU WANT THAT OLD CRATE CRUSHED TO FIREWOOD.



THE LAST LORRY DREW LEVEL WITH STANTON. ON THE SPUR OF THE MOMENT, HE RAN TO CATCH UP WITH THE VEHICLE . . .

THEY'RE PRETTY CERTAIN TO BE GOING TO THE FRONT LINE. I'LL TAKE A LIFT WITH THEM . . .

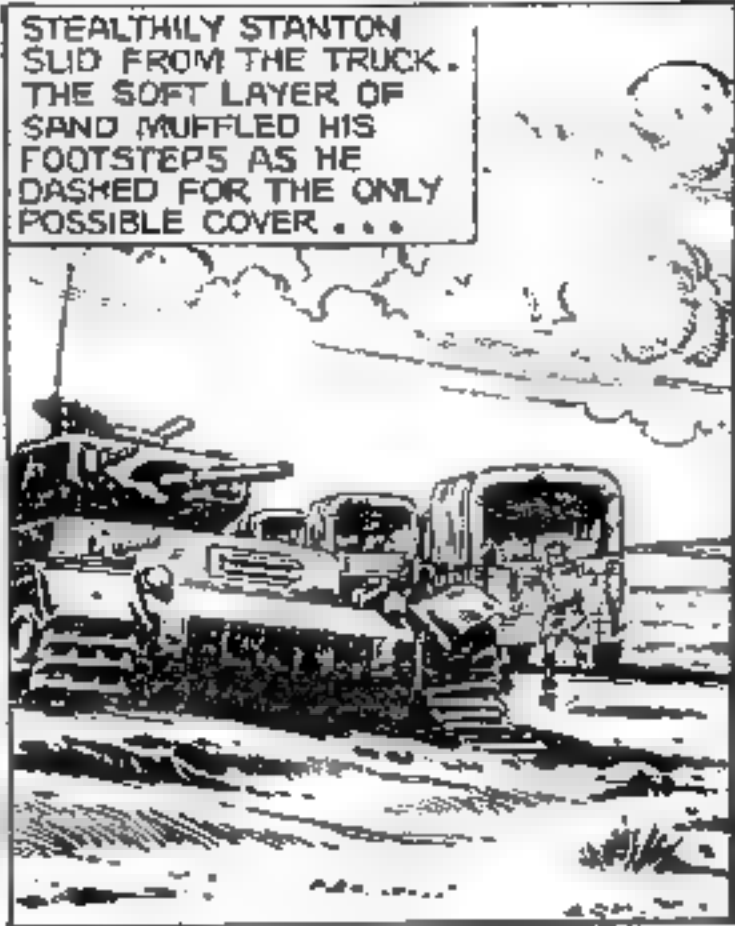


AS THEY NEARED THE FRONT LINE, THE CONVOY GROUNDED TO A HALT AT A MILITARY CHECKPOINT. WITH TYPICAL GERMAN THOROUGHNESS, THE OFFICER IN CHARGE INSISTED ON EXAMINING EVERY TRUCK.

RATIONS, AMMUNITION AND STORES FOR THE SEVENTH ARTILLERY, HERR OBERLEUTNANT.

RIGHT. WE SHALL EXAMINE EACH VEHICLE!

STEALTHILY STANTON SLID FROM THE TRUCK. THE SOFT LAYER OF SAND MUFFLED HIS FOOTSTEPS AS HE DASHED FOR THE ONLY POSSIBLE COVER . . .



ANOTHER VEHICLE JOINED THE QUEUE AT THE CHECK POINT. STANTON, A FLUENT GERMAN-SPEAKER, SAT IN AMAZEMENT AS HE OVERHEARD A DISCUSSION OF A TOP GERMAN SECRET...

WE HAVE NINE DAYS TO PREPARE FOR THE FUHRER'S VISIT. WHERE SHOULD THE MEETING TAKE PLACE?

I SUGGEST THE FIELD MARSHAL'S H.Q. AT SIDI-RAZLAT.

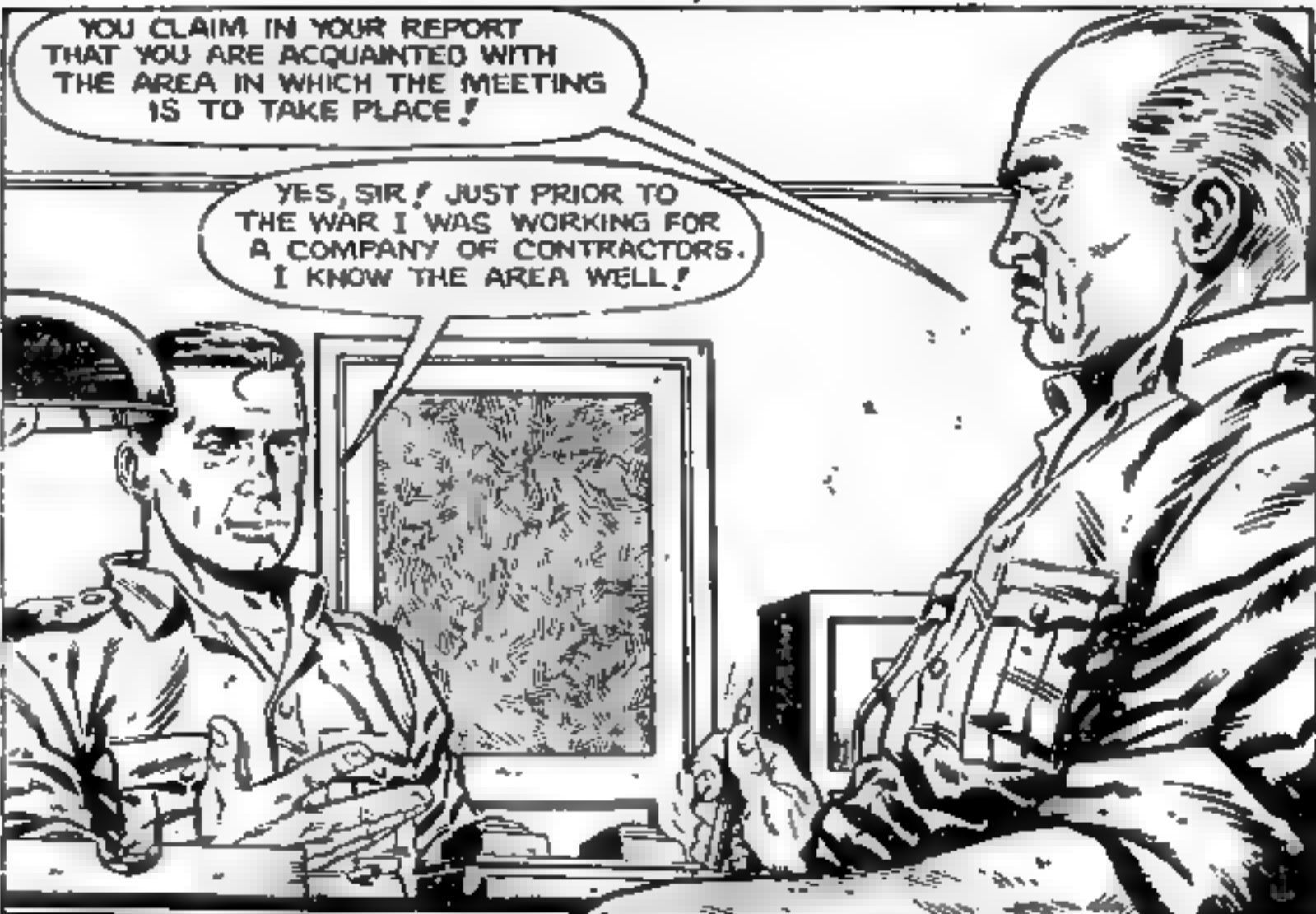


SLOWLY, STANTON GROUND OUT HIS CIGARETTE AS HE CAME TO THE END OF HIS STORY...

WELL, SIR, THE REST YOU KNOW. I SLIPPED AWAY AND WAS FOUND HALF DEAD BY A DESERT PATROL WHO BROUGHT ME IN.


I SEE!





YOU CLAIM IN YOUR REPORT
THAT YOU ARE ACQUAINTED WITH
THE AREA IN WHICH THE MEETING
IS TO TAKE PLACE!

YES, SIR! JUST PRIOR TO
THE WAR I WAS WORKING FOR
A COMPANY OF CONTRACTORS.
I KNOW THE AREA WELL!



IF A RAID
IS ORGANISED ON
SIDI-RAZLAT, STANTON,
WILL YOU ACT AS
GUIDE?

I'D BE GLAD TO, SIR.
I HAVE A SCORE TO
SETTLE FOR MY
REGIMENT!

Chapter 2. Stormy Handling

ALONE IN HIS OFFICE, COLONEL BRAYBROOKE ANALYSED THE HAZARDS OF SUCH AN OPERATION. THE CHOICE OF A COMMANDER WOULD BE ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTORS . . .

WE NEED TO STRIKE ACCURATELY—AND FAST! JEFFCOTT'S THE STEADY, COOL-HEADED TYPE WE NEED FOR THIS JOB. HIM AND MCGILL . . .



LATER THAT DAY, TWO COMMANDO OFFICERS, MAJOR JEFFCOTT AND CAPTAIN MCGILL TOGETHER WITH CAPTAIN STANTON WERE GATHERED ROUND BRAYBROOKE'S DESK . . .

THE SUCCESS OF THIS VENTURE COULD BRING GERMANY TO HER KNEES! THAT'S WHY EACH MAN MUST BE HAND-PICKED!



IF IT GIVES US A CHANCE TO POLISH OFF ■ FEW JERRIES, I'LL BE HAPPY.



MCGILL'S FANATICAL HATRED OF THE GERMANS WAS LEGENDARY IN HIS UNIT.

The Unexpected

NOT ONE OF THE COMMANDOS KNEW THEIR DESTINATION, BUT IN THE FOLLOWING WEEKS OF TRAINING IN RUBBER DINGHIES, RUMOURS WERE RIFE...

HAVE YOU HEARD, MATE? WE'RE GOING TO BLOW UP A MINEFIELD IN ONE OF THEM NORWEGIAN FIORDS!

OH, ARE WE, PERKINS? I THOUGHT WE WERE GOING TO FIND A DESERT ISLAND WHERE YOU CAN SLEEP IN THE SUN FOR THE DURATION! CUT THE YAPPING AND GET ON WITH THE JOB!



ALTHOUGH THE MEN WERE IN PEAK CONDITION, THE VITAL IMPORTANCE OF THEIR MISSION MEANT A RAPID RUN-THROUGH OF THE TECHNIQUES THEY WERE LIKELY TO NEED. STANTON'S QUICK GRASP OF THESE DETAILS DREW APPROVAL FROM EVEN THE MOST HARDENED COMMANDO.



THAT BLOKE STANTON'S PICKING THINGS UP QUICK, SARGE!

HELL DO, I RECKON, CORPORAL!

THE MORE HE SAW OF STANTON, THE MORE MAJOR JEFFCOTT LIKED HIM. DURING THE TENSE, UNCERTAIN DAYS BEFORE THEIR EMBARKATION, THE TWO MEN BECAME FIRM FRIENDS . . .

BEFORE THE WAR BROKE OUT, I'D NEVER EVEN HELD A GUN. ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING WAS MY JOB. WHAT WAS YOURS?

I SUPPOSE WAR'S MY BUSINESS. I'M A REGULAR. MILITARY FAMILY BACKGROUND, SANDHURST... THAT SORT OF THING...

SUDDENLY THEY RECEIVED ORDERS TO EMBARK FOR AN UNKNOWN DESTINATION. CAPTAIN MCGILL SUPERVISED THE LOADING OF EQUIPMENT ABOARD A SUBMARINE . . .

ARE YOU LAZY SLOBS GOING TO TAKE ALL DAY TO GET THOSE STORES ABOARD?

'LAZY SLOBS'—HE'S GOT A NERVE! THIS BOX WEIGHS A PERISHIN' TON!

KEEP YOUR HAIR ON, SARGE! MCGILL'S ALWAYS LIKE THIS BEFORE AN OP.

SERGEANT WHITE AND SPIDER PERKINS WERE NOT THE ONLY ONES TO FEEL THE STING OF MCGILL'S WHIPLASH TONGUE . . .

PICK UP YOUR FEET, KENNEDY! CAN'T YOU STAND UP, MAN?

STONE THE CROWS! ANYBODY'D THINK I FELL OVER FOR THE FUN OF IT!

ONCE UNDER WAY, THE LONG SLEEK CRAFT SURMERGED. THE COMMANDOS HAD TO ACCUSTOM THEMSELVES TO THE CRAMPED, STUFFY WORLD OF THE MEN WHO SPENT THEIR LIVES BENEATH THE SURFACE OF THE SEA.



'HOME SWEET HOME' AGAIN, SARGE! TALK ABOUT TACTLESS!

IT'S A NICE TUNE, SPIDER. AND YOU CAN STOP ROLLING THOSE FAGS, MATE — WE'RE NOT ALLOWED TO SMOKE WHILE THE SUB'S UNDERWATER!

TWO DAYS OUT MAJOR JEFFCOTT BRIEFED HIS MEN...



THIS RADIO IS VITAL! HYLER HIMSELF IS MEETING RUMMEL IN SIX HOURS. HERE, OUR PLAN WILL BE TO...

PHREW! WE'RE AILING HIGH THIS TIME!

IN AN ATMOSPHERE THAT COULD TRY THE NERVES OF THE COOLEST-HEADED VETERAN, CONSTANT BICKERING AND PETTY DIFFERENCES WERE COMMON . . .

LOOK, CAPTAIN MCGILL— TH'S WAITING IS TRYING FOR ALL OF US, SO EASE UP ON THE MEN. YOU'RE RIDING THEM TOO HARD!

WHAT DOES HE KNOW? I CAME THROUGH THE RANKS— I UNDERSTAND THE MEN! IT'S NO GOOD BEING TOO SOFT!

BENEATH THE DARK, HOSTILE WAVES, THEY SURGED FORWARD UNTIL THE SUBMARINES WERE ONLY TWO MILES FROM THE CYRENAICAN COAST.

WE'RE NEARING YOUR DESTINATION, MAJOR JEFF COTT!

THAT'LL BE A RELIEF TO THE MEN, LIEUTENANT HODGES! THEY'LL LIKE THE IDEA OF BREATHING GOOD FRESH AIR AGAIN!

SOON THEY WERE CLOSE ENOUGH FOR MAJOR JEFFCOTT TO LOOK AT THE SHORE THROUGH THE PERISCOPE . . .

IT'S REALLY TOO DARK TO SEE PROPERLY, BUT EVERYTHING SEEMS QUIET.

GOOD-O! WE DON'T WANT ANY NAZI SNOOPERS ROUND WHEN WE TAKE A CRACK AT THEIR BOSS!



BUT AS THE SLEEK SHAPES OF THE SUBMARINES EMERGED FROM THE DEPTHS, AND THE MEN PREPARED FOR DISEMBARKATION, AN UNEXPECTED HAZARD CROPPED UP . . .



A WHITE CAPPED SEA FROTHED BACK AND FORTH OVER THE EXPOSED CASINGS, THE WIND SCREAMING ACROSS THEIR STAY-WIRES. THE SEA WAS ROUGH!

AND AS THE FIRST RATING CLIMBED OUT ON TO THE WET, SLIPPERY PLATES, FURTHER DANGER REVEALED ITSELF...

CAP'N HODGES!
GERMAN E-BOAT
COMING UP
FAST!



AS THE TWO SUBMARINES CRASH DIVED THEY COULD SEE THE E-BOAT'S SISTER SHIP SURGING FORWARD TO ADD THE WEIGHT OF HER ARMAMENT TO THE ATTACK.



TAKING A LAST QUICK LOOK THROUGH THE PERISCOPE AS THEY PLUNGED DOWN INTO THE DEPTHS, LIEUTENANT HODGES SUDDENLY GAVE A GASP OF SURPRISE . . .

WELL, I'LL BE DAMNED—THEY'RE TURNING AWAY!

THAT'S ODD! WHAT COULD HAVE MADE THEM CHANGE THEIR MINDS?

AFTER A SHORT WAIT, THEY ROSE AGAIN TO THE SURFACE—HALF EXPECTING TO LOOK STRAIGHT INTO THE CUTTING BOWS OF AN AVENGING E BOAT!

THIS IS A SPOT OF LUCK, MAJOR! THOSE TWO JERRY BOATS COULD HAVE BLOWN US SKY-HIGH!

MAYBE THEY'VE GONE FOR REINFORCEMENTS, LIEUTENANT.

WITH A BIG SWELL RUNNING, HODGES CAREFULLY CONNED THE SUBMARINES TOWARDS THE BEACH. TWO HUNDRED YARDS FROM THE SHORE THEY WAITED AS A LIGHT WINKED FROM THE CLIFFS . . .

TWO DOTS!
THAT'S OUR CONTACT
SIGNALLING!

THIS IS AS NEAR
AS WE CAN GO, MAJOR.
YOUR LADS'LL HAVE TO
USE THEIR BOATS
FROM HERE!

THE BLASTING WAVES, PITCHING AND TOSSENG
IN THE WIND-SWEPT SEA WERE HARD TO
BOARD . . .

SORRY, SUE? I SLIPPED
ON THE WET DECK!

COME ON!
GET IN AND STOP
ACTING LIKE A
CLOWN!

PERNIE AND CAPTAIN NEUL SET
OFF TOWARDS THE BEACH, PATTENING
FURY OUT AGAINST AN OFF SHORE
CURRENT AND A RISING WIND.
SUDDENLY A HUGE WAVE HIT THE
DINGHY . . .

WHAT
THE
HELL?



CORPORAL KENNEDY
STRUGGLED TO THE
SURFACE AND SPLASHED
FORWARD WITH
FEIBLE STROKES...

I CAN'T...
KEEP GOING
MUCH
LONGER...

ALL RIGHT,
KENNEDY, HANG
ON! I'M
COMING!

EVEN AS THE
EXHAUSTED MAN
BEGAN TO SINK
BELOW THE
WAVES, MCGILL'S
STRONG ARM
CRASHED HIM
FIRMLY.
FROM THE
SUBMARINE,
JEFFCOTT
WATCHED...

MCGILL AND
I DON'T HIT IT
OFF ALL THE TIME
BUT HE'S GOT
NERVE, ALL
RIGHT!

LEAVING KENNEDY LYING GASPING ON THE
BEACH, MCGILL WALKED UP TO AN OLD
ARAB WHO SAT HIDDEN UP CLUTCHING A
SMALL TORCH...

ALL IS WELL,
EFFENDI! THERE ARE
NO GERMANS ON
THE CLIFF.

I HOPE YOU'RE TELLING
THE TRUTH, YOU OLD BASTARD!
IF YOU'RE NOT, I'LL WRING
YOUR NECK - PERSONALLY!

AT ALL FALL'S SIGNAL THE REST OF THE MEN ON THE SUBMARINE STRUGGLED TO PREPARE THE DINGHIES. BUT THE ANGRY SEAS KEPT THE DECK PERMANENTLY AWASH...



ONE BY ONE THE DINGHIES WERE LAUNCHED AND SUCCESSFULLY BOARDED. UNTIL SPIDER PERKINS TOOK HIS TURN...



AS THE CLUSTER OF TINY BOATS LURCHED UNCERTAINLY TOWARDS THE DARK SHORE, SPIDER WINCING WITH PAIN WAS DRAGGED DRIPPING AND MISERABLE BACK TO THE DECK...

YOU'VE BROKEN YOUR ANKLE TOSH! GOT A PAIN IN YOUR CHEST, TOO?

NOT LIKELY—I'M JUST FEELING FOR MY FAG-PAPERS. JUST MY LUCK—THEY'RE ALL DRENCHED!



THE FIRST LANDING PARTY DRAGGED THEIR DINGHIES ASHORE, THEN LOOKED BACK AND SAW THEIR COMRADES ON THE SECOND SUBMARINE UNDERGOING THE HAZARDS THEY HAD ENURED...

I PITY 'EM! OUR TRIP WAS NO HOLIDAY—BUT THE WIND'S RISEN SINCE THEN!



WHEN THE LAST OF THEIR HUMAN CARGO HAD LANDED, THE TWO SUBMARINES PUT TO SEA, PLUNGING DOWN INTO THE ANONYMITY OF THE DARK, CONCEALING DEPTHS...



AT HOME, JEFFCOTT AND MCGILL STUDIED THE CLIFFS WHICH ROSE STEEPLY FROM THE BEACH, TOWERING HIGH ABOVE THE SEA...

WE'RE IN TROUBLE, MAJOR. PERKINS IS OUR CLIMBING EXPERT, AND HE BROKE HIS ANKLE ON THE SUB.

IT LOOKS AS IF IT'S UP TO ME, MCGILL. I'LL GO FIRST.

I'LL TAKE THE SECOND ROPE, MAJOR. I'VE DONE A LOT OF CLIMBING BACK HOME!



Chapter 3. *Dangerous Journey*

McGILL FELT IT WAS A BLOW TO HIS PRIDE WHEN STANTON VOLUNTEERED TO SCALE THE CLIFF. BUT IT WAS A TASK THAT MCGILL KNEW WAS BEYOND HIS OWN CAPABILITIES.

CAN YOU MAKE IT STANTON? THIS WON'T BE A HOLIDAY CLIMB!

WHY SHOULDN'T HE MAKE IT? HE'S SUPPOSED TO BE OUR GUIDE - ALL RIGHT, STANTON, GUIDE US UP THAT!

THE TWO CLIMBERS BEGAN TO EDGE THEIR WAY UP THE TORTUOUS CLIFF. MCGILL, IMPATIENT WITH THE DELAY IN THE OPERATION, SWUNG ROUND IRRITABLY ON THE MEN...

COME ON, YOU USELESS LOT! GET SOME ROPES ROUND THE EQUIPMENT, READY FOR LIFTING!

THE CLIMB WAS SLOW BUT STEADY UNTIL MAJOR JEFFCOTT SUDDENLY GAVE A SHOUT OF ALARM. HE FELT A FOOT HOLD GIVING WAY BENEATH HIS CLIMBING BOOTS . . .

BUT BEFORE THE MAJOR COULD SECURE A FIRMER GRIP, THE ROCK LEDGE BROKE AWAY — LEAVING HIM HANGING BY HIS FINGERS . . .

I'VE HIT
A LOOSE
PATCH!

CAREFUL,
MAJOR — EDGE
THIS WAY!

HOLD ON,
I THINK I CAN
REACH YOU!

CAN'T HOLD
IT LONG . . . MY
FINGERS ARE
SLIPPING . . .



WITH THE HELP OF STANTON'S ENCOURAGEMENT, JEFFCOTT FOUND A TOE-HOLD ON THE SOLID LEDGE ON WHICH HIS COMPANION WAS STANDING.

THAT'S THE LEDGE—PUT YOUR FOOT ON IT FIRMLY!

THAT'S AS FAR AS I CAN REACH!

THE QUIET CONFIDENCE IN STANTON'S VOICE SURPRISED THE MAJOR. THIS MAN WAS MORE THAN A HOLIDAY CLIMBER—HE WAS AN EXPERT!

OKAY, I'VE GOT YOU. WHEN I PULL, TRY TO THROW ALL YOUR WEIGHT ON TO YOUR LEFT FOOT AND GRAB HOLD OF ME!

RIGHT, I'M READY...

EXERTING ALL HIS ENERGY, STANTON JERKED THE MAJOR TOWARDS HIM...

DONE IT! PHEW—THAT WAS A CLOSE CALL!

EASE UP ALONGSIDE ME AND REST, MAJOR. THERE ARE PLENTY OF HAND-HOLDS.



THE TWO MEN RESUMED THEIR CLIMB AND MADE GOOD TIME TO THE TOP OF THE CLIFF. A COIL OF ROPE SHOOK OUT TO THE IMPATIENT COMMANDOS WAITING BELOW.

EVEN THE TWO ROPES TIED TOGETHER MAY NOT REACH...

DON'T WORRY, MAJOR. IT WILL BE LONG ENOUGH.

HEAVY ROPES WERE HAULED UP BY THE LIGHT LINE THE TWO CLIMBERS HAD CARRIED. WHEN THEY WERE SECURED, THE COMMANDOS BEGAN CLAWING THEIR WAY UP THE CLIFF.

SERGEANT WHITE, GET UP TOP AND KEEP THIS LOT MOVING. WE DON'T WANT TO BE HERE ALL NIGHT!



RIGHT SIR!

I WOULDN'T LIKE TO BE ANY JERRY WHO GETS IN HIS WAY TONIGHT!

AS THE EXPLOSIVES WERE HAULED UP, A COMMANDO HAD TO 'RIDE' THE LOAD TO HOLD IT AWAY FROM THE ROUGH SURFACE OF THE ROCKS.

IN AN HOUR, THE MEN AND ALL THEIR EQUIPMENT WERE ASSEMBLED AT THE TOP OF THE CLIFF.

IT'S TIME WE WERE ON OUR WAY! THE CLIMB TOOK LONGER THAN WE ANTICIPATED.



COR! IT'S HARD ENOUGH GETTING UP THIS WAY. I DON'T KNOW HOW CAPTAIN STANTON CLIMBED IT...



ALL RIGHT! ON YOUR FEET! SERGEANT WHITE—GET THE MEN MOVING!



The Unexpected

THE FIRST SIGNS OF APPROACHING DAY WERE CUTTING THE DARK SKY AS THEY ARRIVED AT THE DRIED UP RIVER BED . . .

TEST IT FOR MINES AND BOOBY TRAPS — BUT I DOUBT IF ANYONE'S BEEN NEAR THIS PLACE FOR YEARS .

RIGHT!
I'LL START CHECKING THE REAR, IF YOU LIKE!



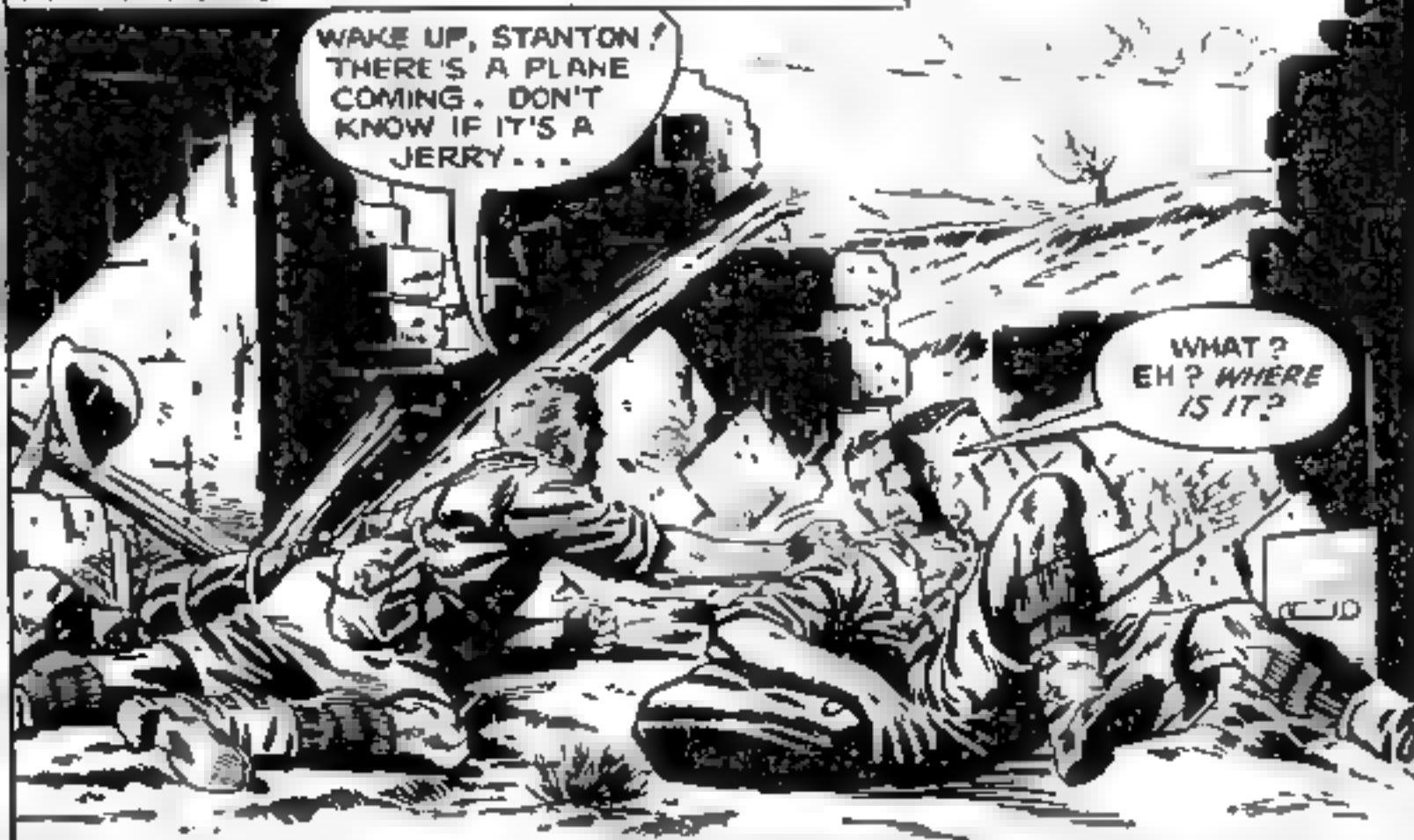
WITH TWO MEN POSTED ON GUARD, THE REST SPREAD OUT TO FIND NOOKS AND CRANNIES WHERE THEY COULD SLEEP THE DAYLIGHT HOURS AWAY IN PEACE . . .

WHAT'S THE MATTER, CHUM, DON'T YOU LIKE MUSIC?

IF HITLER HAD HEARD YOU PLAY THAT SECRET WEAPON YOU CALL A MOUTH ORGAN, HE'D HAVE JAGGED IT IN YEARS AGO, SARGE!



THE BRIGHT BURNING BALL OF THE SUN CLIMBED HIGH OVERHEAD, BEATING DOWN FEROCIOUSLY ON THE WADI. THE COMMANDOS SHIFTED RESTLESSLY IN THEIR SLEEP...



AS THE OUTLINES OF THE PLANE BECAME MORE DISTINCT, BOTH MEN IDENTIFIED IT...



The Unexpected

NOTHING MORE WAS SEEN OF THE AIRCRAFT, AND AS THE EVENING DREW NEAR, THE MEN CHECKED THEIR WEAPONS AND BEGAN PREPARING FOR THE CRITICAL TASK AHEAD.



AS NIGHT FELL, MCGILL AND A FEW PICKED MEN MADE READY TO LEAVE...

GOOD LUCK, MCGILL. WE'LL GIVE YOU TWENTY-FIVE MINUTES TO BLOW UP THE GENERATING STATION AND MEET US.

WE'LL DO IT, SIR!



NOW THEY WERE
ALMOST READY
TO BEGIN THE
MOST PERILOUS
AND DIFFICULT
TASK OF THEIR
SERVICE
CAREERS . . .

NOT LONG
TO GO NOW, BILL—
NERVOUS?

YOU'RE JOKING!
I RECKON CAPTAIN
STANTON WILL SEE WE
GET THROUGH THIS
ALL RIGHT!



IN THE
DARKNESS
BEYOND,
MCGILL'S
PARTY HAD
MADE RAPID
PROGRESS

SERGEANT WHITE — CREATE A
DIVERSION? GIVE ME A CHANCE TO
GET BEHIND THAT SENTRY.

OKAY SIR!
IT'S IN THE
BAG!



SOUNDLESSLY, MCGILL'S
GROUP BEGAN TO
SPREAD OUT . . .



SNOWY WHITE LOBBED A STONE INTO THE BUSHES. THE RUSE WORKED THE GERMAN
SENTRY STEPPED AWAY FROM THE BUILDING TO INVESTIGATE. MCGILL FLATTENED
HIMSELF SOUNDLESSLY AGAINST THE WALL'S CONCEALING BLACKNESS . . .



NEXT SECOND, MCGILL HAD THE SENTRY IN AN IRON GRIP.

AAGH...!

ALL RIGHT, YOU BLOKES! THE CAPTAIN'S DONE HIS PART. LET'S GET MOVING.



THE REST OF THE PARTY MADE A DASH FOR THE DOOR OF THE GENERATING PLANT. MCGILL STOOD DEFIANTLY BY THE DOOR, READY TO INTERCEPT ANY UNWANTED VISITORS...

THAT'S FUNNY—I THOUGHT THIS WAS SUPPOSED TO HAVE BEEN BUILT BY STANTON'S FIRM... AN ENGLISH COMPANY...

GIVE US THREE MINUTES, S.I.R. THIS LOOKS LIKE BEING AN EASY JOB.

THOMPSON ELECTRICAL
CO. LTD.
CAPTAINS - 1917-1918



WITHIN RECORD TIME,
THE OTHERS HAD
COMPLETED THEIR TASK.
TOGETHER THEY HARED
BACK INTO THE
DARKNESS, SNOWY
JOINING THE WIRE
LEADS TO THE
DETONATING BOX.

OKAY—
NOW!

WELL DONE,
SARGE / THAT'S
A NEAT BIT
OF WORK!

THEIR MISSION SUCCESSFUL,
THEY PACKED THEIR
EQUIPMENT AND SET OFF...

IF THE REST OF THE
RAID GOES AS SMOOTHLY
AS THAT, WE'LL BE
SITTING PRETTY!

AND WE'RE
TEN MINUTES
AHEAD OF
SCHEDULE



THEY ARRIVED AT THE RENDEZVOUS BEFORE MAJOR JEFFCOTT'S MAIN PARTY. BUT SOON THE OTHERS CAME ON THE SCENE ...

DID EVERYTHING GO OFF ALL RIGHT, MCGILL?

SURE, SIR! THERE WAS ONLY ONE SENTRY. I SETTLED HIM WITH NO TROUBLE.

YOU KILLED HIM?

FOR SOME REASON, STANTON SEEMED SURPRISED AT MCGILL'S METHOD OF DEALING WITH THE GERMAN ...

MORE CONFIDENT NOW, THE COMMANDOS TURNED ONCE MORE TO THE REAL TASK AHEAD OF THEM. HARDENED BY MONTHS OF RIGID TRAINING, THEY MADE GOOD TIME TO SID RAZLAT. SUDDENLY ...

STONE THE CROWS - IT'S A DOG! LET'S HOPE ITS OWNER DOESN'T COME OUT TO INVESTIGATE!

FREEZE!



BUT IT SEEMED
LUCK WAS AGAINST
THEM . . .

I COULD PICK HIM
OFF LIKE A CLAY-
PIGEON, SIR! HOW
ABOUT IT?

NO, MCGILL!
DON'T SHOOT! HE
MAY NOT HAVE
SEEN US.



WITH A SIGH OF EXASPERATION, THE ARAB
TURNED HIS BACK ON THE SKINNY,
CRINGING ANIMAL AND SLOUCHED BACK
INTO THE HOUSE.

ACCURSED
CREATURE! ALLAM
ONLY KNOWS WHY
I KEEP HIM...



THEIR RUBBER-SOLED COMMANDO BOOTS
MADE LITTLE NOISE ON THE SANDY ROAD
AS THEY MOVED STEALTHILY THROUGH
THE NIGHT. AFTER SOME TIME, THEY
REACHED THE OUTSKIRTS OF A
SCATTERED NATIVE VILLAGE.

THIS IS ANTEDABIA, A
NATIVE VILLAGE! IT
SHOULD BE DESERTED
AT THIS TIME OF
NIGHT.

PASS THE
WORD DOWN TO
THE MEN TO BE AS
QUIET AS POSSIBLE
AS WE GO
THROUGH...



A CAR-LOAD OF GERMAN OFFICERS, RETURNING LATE FROM A NIGHT'S REVELRY, WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN SO CAREFREE HAD THEY KNOWN HOW CLOSE THEY WERE TO THEIR ENEMY...

THERE'S A CAR COMING THIS WAY, SIR!

SCATTER—
TAKE COVER AND
DON'T TRY
ANYTHING!

McGILL'S FINGER ITCHED ON THE TRIGGER AS THE CAR'S BLAZING HEADLIGHTS ILLUMINATED THE SQUALID ARAB DWELLINGS...

LONG LIVE THE
FATHERLAND—
AND DEATH
TO OUR
ENEMIES!

THEY MUST
BE PRETTY SURE
OF THEMSELVES
TO DRIVE
AROUND WITH
HEADLIGHTS ON

WITHOUT FURTHER MISHAP, THEY CAME IN SIGHT OF THEIR DESTINATION—ROMMEL'S H.Q. AT SIDI RAZLAT, DEEP IN THE GREEN BELT OF CYRENAICA.

WHERE IS THE ENTRANCE?
I CAN'T SEE ONE
FROM HERE.

THE
BUILDING
IS IN THE
FORM OF A SQUARE,
WITH AN INNER
COURTYARD. THE
ONLY ENTRANCE IS
THROUGH THE
ARCHWAY ON THE
OTHER SIDE!

Chapter 4. *The Jaws Close*

IN HUSHED TONES
THEY DISCUSSED
THE PLAN OF
ACTION . . .

THERE'S A
GATE WAY THROUGH
THE WIRE OPPOSITE
THE COURTYARD!

THAT WILL BE
GUARDED. WE'D BETTER
CUT THROUGH THE WIRE
HERE AND TAKE THE
GUARDS FROM
THE REAR!



NO GERMANS WERE IN SIGHT AND ONLY THE
COILED BARBED WIRE FENCE GAVE ANY
INDICATION OF THE WARTIME USE OF THE
BUILDING.

SERGEANT, TAKE A COUPLE OF
MEN AND CUT A GAP THROUGH
THE WIRE WE'LL COVER YOU!

CONWAY AND OSBORNE,
GET YOUR CUTTERS OUT
AND FOLLOW ME
NO NOISE!



BUT SOMETHING WAS WORRYING MCGILL. IT WAS BEGINNING TO SEEM TO HIM THAT THE WHOLE OPERATION WAS WORKING OUT TOO EASILY.

IT'S QUIET! TOO QUIET!
I DON'T LIKE IT!

WE'RE A LONG WAY FROM THE FRONT LINE HERE. THEY PROBABLY THINK THEY DON'T NEED A HEAVY GUARD!



AT A SIGNAL FROM THE SERGEANT, THE COMMANDOS MOVED QUICKLY THROUGH THE GAP THEY HAD CUT IN THE WIRE, AND GROUPED IN THE SHADOWS OF THE BUILDING.

I CAN SEE THE GATE AND A SMALL GUARD HOUSE.

I'LL TAKE CARE OF THE GUARD, MAJOR!



NO, YOU DON'T, SERGEANT WHITE AND CORPORAL KENNEDY! - COME WITH ME!

IGNORING STANTON'S PROTESTS, THE THREE MEN FLITTED THROUGH THE SHADOWS TOWARDS THE GATE.

THERE'S NOBODY ABOUT AT ALL, SIR!

I DON'T GET IT! IF THE BIG CHEESE WAS HERE, THIS PLACE SHOULD BE FULL WITH JERRIES!

I'VE A FEELING SOMETHING IS GOING TO BREAK, SOON, SO STAY ON YOUR TOES. CORPORAL, OPEN THAT GATE—WE MAY WANT TO GET OUT IN A HURRY!

MCGILL'S FIGHTING INSTINCT TOLD HIM THAT SOMETHING WAS WRONG, AND SOMEHOW HE FELT THAT STANTON, WHOM HE HAD NEVER LIKED, WAS RESPONSIBLE.

THE PLACE IS DESERTED, MAJOR! I'M BEGINNING TO THINK SOMEONE HAS GOT HIS FACTS MIXED ON THIS TRIP.

THIS IS THE PLACE I TELL YOU!

STANTON! YOU SEEM TO KNOW YOUR WAY AROUND. YOU LEAD THE WAY!



CAUTIOUSLY, CAPTAIN STANTON, MADE HIS WAY INTO THE COURTYARD, HIS GUN READY FOR ACTION . . .

IT'S ALL CLEAR - COME QUICKLY!

I'VE GOT A FEELING THERE'S SOME TRICKERY GOING ON, MAJOR . . .

WHILE I'M RUNNING THE SHOW WE CARRY OUT ORDERS, MCGILL.

STANDING TO ONE SIDE, CAPTAIN STANTON WATCHED AS THE COMMANDOS CREPT SILENTLY INTO THE WALLED COURTYARD, THEN FOLLOWED THEM INTO THE SHADOWS.

IT'S DARK IN HERE. CAN'T SEE A THING! I DON'T LIKE IT!

WHERE'S STANTON? HE KNOWS THE WAY INTO THE BUILDING.

SUDDENLY, A SHARP ORDER IN GERMAN BROKE THE SILENCE. INSTANTLY THE BRITISH SOLDIERS WERE BLINDED BY POWERFUL LIGHTS...

IT'S BLINDING!
I CAN'T SEE
ANYTHING!

WHAT
THE
HECK...!



AS THE COMMANDOS' EYES BECAME ACCUSTOMED TO THE LIGHT, THEY FOUND THEY HAD WALKED RIGHT INTO A NEATLY LAID TRAP!

TELL YOUR MEN TO LAY DOWN
THEIR ARMS, MAJOR! ANY FALSE
HEROICS WILL ONLY CAUSE
UNNECESSARY BLOODSHED!

PERISHIN'
NAZIS! I'LL TAKE
SOME OF 'EM WITH
ME BEFORE I LAY
MY GUN DOWN!

WELL,
I'LL BE...



A FAMILIAR VOICE BEHIND THEM BROUGHT THEM SWINGING ROUND ON THEIR HEELS ...

YOU'D BETTER DO AS YOU'RE TOLD, MAJOR JEFFCOTT — OUR TROOPS HAVE ORDERS TO FIRE IF YOU SHOW ANY SIGN OF RESISTANCE!

SO YOU'RE ONE OF THEM, STANTON! I'VE NEVER TRUSTED YOU FROM THE BEGINNING ...

CORPORAL KENNEDY STARED AT STANTON UNBELIEVINGLY ... THIS WAS THE MAN HE HAD REGARDED AS A HERO — A NAZI SPY!

THAT TWO-FACED PERISHER STANTON! I'LL FIX HIM!

EASY WITH THAT GRENADE, CORP. DON'T LET THE JERRIES SEE IT...



The Unexpected

SLOWLY THE CORPORAL EASED THE GRENADE BEHIND HIS BACK, WHILE THE SERGEANT LEANED FORWARD TO JERK OUT THE PIN.



WITH THE CAPTURE OF ALL THE COMMANDOS, THE GERMANS WERE TO PUT INTO OPERATION THE LAST PART OF THEIR PLAN... THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TWO SUBMARINES WHICH WERE TO PICK UP THE COMMANDOS...



WELL DONE, OBERLEUTNANT! GIVE THE COMMAND-POST THE TIME AND POSITION OF THE SUBMARINE EXPECTED ARRIVAL.

JA, HERR HAUPTMANN! WE SHOULD MAKE IT A FULL BAG TONIGHT!

ANY ILLUSIONS THE HAPLESS MEN MAY HAVE HAD WERE QUICKLY DESTROYED BY THE JEERS OF THE MAN THEY HAD KNOWN AS STANTON.

SO MUCH FOR THE UNBEATABLE BRITISH COMMANDOS! IT HAS AMUSED ME GREATLY, WATCHING YOU ALL GO TO SO MUCH TROUBLE OVER A NON EXISTENT MEETING!

WHY, YOU...



THERE WAS ONE QUESTION THAT WAS PUZZLING MAJOR JEFFCOTT...

WHY DID YOU SAVE MY LIFE BACK ON THAT CLIFF, IF YOU INTENDED TO LEAD US INTO THIS TRAP? AT LEAST THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN ONE DEATH NOT ON YOUR CONSCIENCE!

THAT IS SIMPLE, MAJOR — I WILL EXPLAIN...

YOUR DEATH WOULD HAVE BEEN UNIMPORTANT IN ITSELF, BUT WE WANTED ALL OF YOU. WITHOUT A LEADER, THE WHOLE RAID MIGHT HAVE BEEN ABANDONED.

TO THINK I LOOKED UPON YOU AS A PERSONAL FRIEND...



IN ONE LIGHTNING MOVEMENT, KENNEDY DREW BACK HIS ARM—AND HURLED THE GRENADE WITH EVERY OUNCE OF HIS STRENGTH AT THE SEARCHLIGHT'S TAUNTING BEAM . . .

DOWN EVERYBODY!

HIMMEL!
A GRENADE!



VICIOUS GUNFIRE RAKED THE COURTYARD AS THE GRENADE BLEW THE SEARING SEARCHLIGHT TO BITS, PLUNGING EVERYTHING INTO DARKNESS . . .

HIMMEL!
I CANNOT
SEE THE
ENGLANDERS...

NICE WORK,
MATE! THAT'LL
EVEN THINGS
UP A BIT!

AAA...!



AS HE WAS
MOVING SWIFTLY OUT OF
THE COURTYARD . . .

ON THE
TWO BATH ROOMS
YOU'RE NOT
LEaving THE
AS THAT?



THEY WERE
THEY WERE
THEY WERE



JEFFCOTT
STARED AT THE
RETREATING
FIGURE . . .

McGILL? WHERE D'YOU THINK
YOU'RE GOING? COME BACK
TO YOUR MEN — AT ONCE!
THAT'S AN ORDER!

I'LL TELL YOU
WHERE I'M GOING,
ALL RIGHT . . .

IN A VOICE THAT RASPED
IT'S SCORN, MCGILL SPAT
OUT THE REAL REASON FOR
HIS APPARENT DESERTION . . .

STANTON KNOWS WHEN AND WHERE OUR
SURS ARE PICKING US UP. I'VE GOT TO STOP
HIM GOING TO THEIR HEADQUARTERS . . .
BESIDES, HE DOUBLE CROSSED US.

MCGILL'S
RIGHT! IF JERRY
GETS TO KNOW,
NONE OF US
WILL GET AWAY
ALIVE.

BUT WITHOUT FURTHER ARGUMENT,
HE CALLED SHOT OUT UNDER THE
ARCH AND WAS SWALLOWED UP IN
THE DARK BEYOND . . .

I'M AFRAID
SERGEANT WHITE'S
BENT HIS SIDE . . .
AND WE'VE TWO
WOUNDED!

WHAT
DO WHAT WE
CAN IN THE
NEXT FEW
MINUTES?

FOR THE MOMENT THE COMMANDER HELD THE UPPER
HAND - BUT IT COULD ONLY BE A MATTER OF TIME
BEFORE FRESH GERMAN TROOPS ARRIVED. THEN IT
WOULD BE A DIFFERENT STORY . . .

OKAY, MEN-LET'S
SORT 'EM OUT!

WILENTLESSLY THEY CUT DOWN THE LAST REMAINING
REMAINDERS OF NAZI STORMTROOPERS.

OUT IN THE VILLAGE
MCGILL PEERED CAUTIOUSLY
FROM THE DOORWAY
OF AN OLD ARAB DWELLING...

ENJOY YOUR
WALK, STANTON—
IT'S THE LAST YOU'LL
EVER HAVE!

BUT EVEN AS HE PLANNED STANTON'S
DEATH, HIS OWN LIFE HUNG PRECARIOUSLY
IN THE BALANCE...

PURE CHANCE DREW MCGILL'S HEAD BACK INTO THE SHADOWS
AS THE GERMAN SNIPER'S BULLET CUT STRAIGHT AND TRUE
INTO THE WALL OF THE HOUSE, NOT SIX INCHES FROM HIS FACE!

THAT WAS
TOO CLOSE FOR
COMFORT! SNIPER
— AH, I SEE YOUR
HIDEOUT.

MCGILL WAS AS QUICK AS A PANTHER. HE LEAPT ACROSS THE SPACE BETWEEN THE TWO HOUSES AND SEIZED THE ASTONISHED GERMAN BEFORE HE HAD A CHANCE TO FIRE AGAIN...

YOU WON'T BE NEEDING THAT RIFLE, FRITZ.

NO...NO...

SNATCHING THE GERMAN'S RIFLE, MCGILL PURSUED HIS PREY DOWN THE STREET, HIS EYES COLD STEEL IN A GRIM, MERCILESS FACE...

OBERLEUTNANT STANTON! YOU'VE BETRAYED US, WEARING A BRITISH UNIFORM. NOW I'LL GIVE YOU DEATH FROM A GERMAN BULLET!

NO, WAIT, MCGILL—I'LL HELP YOU, JUST GIVE ME A CHANCE TO...AAGH!

The Unexpected

THERE WAS NO PITY IN MCGILL'S FACE AS HE GAZED DOWN AT THE MAN THEY HAD ONCE TRUSTED — AND WHO HAD LED THEM WITHOUT CONSCIENCE INTO THE VERY JAWS OF DEATH.

KILLING ME CAN'T
SAVE YOUR PRECIOUS MEN
NOW, MCGILL . . . I STILL
WIN . . .

THAT'S WHERE YOU'RE WRONG!
THE MEN YOU BETRAYED ARE
JUST MOPPING UP YOUR GLORIOUS
JERRY TROOPS! YOU'RE A
FAILURE, STANTON!



CARRYING THEIR WOUNDED, THE
COMMANDO SURVIVORS RETREATED
THROUGH THE VILLAGE STREETS,
UNDER COVER OF A CURTAIN OF
BLAZING LEAD . . .

OKAY, LADS, LET'S
GO . . . THIS DUMP'S GOING
TO BE UNHEALTHY SOON . . .



FALLING BACK UNDER THE VICIOUS RAGING STREAM OF FIRE FROM THE COMMANDO REARGUARD, A WOUNDED NAZI OFFICER, HIS EYES BLAZING WITH PAIN AND FURY, TRIED TO RE-ORGANISE HIS DEPLETED FORCE . . .

BUT THERE ARE NO FIGHTING MEN LEFT IN HEADQUARTERS, S.R.!

THEN GIVE THE GUNS TO CLERKS, COOKS— ANYBODY, YOU DOLT! THE ENGLANDERS MUST NOT ESCAPE!

DEFETRATION LENT SPEED TO JEFFCOTT'S MEN. GRADUALLY, THE GAP BETWEEN THE RETREATING COMMANDOS AND THEIR PURSUERS WIDENED . . .

WE'LL BE IN TROUBLE IF THE JERRIES REACH THE BEACH BEFORE WE DO, SIR — WE'LL BE CUT OFF!

I KILLED STANTON BEFORE HE COULD TELL THEM WHERE OUR RENDEZVOUS WAS TO TAKE PLACE! IF WE CAN LOSE THE JERRIES IN THE DARK — WE'LL BE OKAY!



The Unexpected

KEEPING UP THEIR SWIFT PACE THEY SOON ARRIVED AT THE RENDEZVOUS. SPOTTING THE DARK SILHOUETTES OF THE TWO SUBMARINES THEY FLASHED THE SIGNAL, AND SHORTLY THE DINGH 5 WERE ON THEIR WAY.



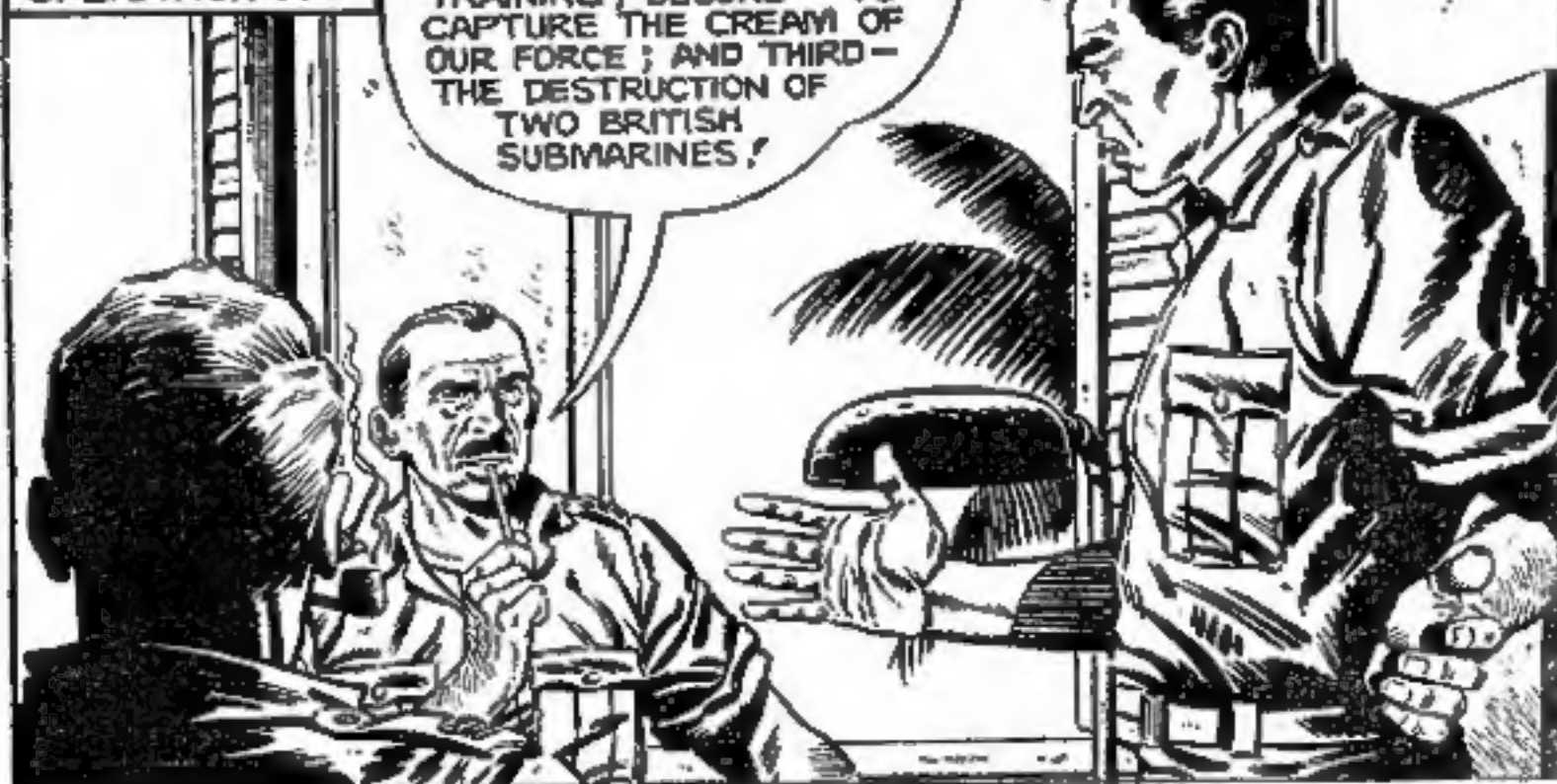
THE JOURNEY PASSED UNEVENTFULLY AND IN DUE TIME THE SURVIVORS OF THE PARTY LANDED AT THEIR BASE IN EGYPT.



TWO DAYS AFTER THE RAID, COLONEL BRAYBROOKE LISTENED CAREFULLY TO THE FULL REPORT OF THE OPERATION . . .

I CAN'T SEE WHAT THE GERMANS HOPED TO GAIN FROM THIS!

THREE THINGS, MCGILL! FIRST - TO STUDY OUR METHODS OF COMMANDO TRAINING; SECOND - TO CAPTURE THE CREAM OF OUR FORCE; AND THIRD - THE DESTRUCTION OF TWO BRITISH SUBMARINES!



AS EACH POINT EMERGED, IT REVEALED MORE CLEARLY THE THOROUGHNESS WITH WHICH THE GERMANS HAD LAID THEIR PLANS. TIMING HAD BEEN AN IMPORTANT FACTOR . . .

HOW COULD THE GERMAN INTELLIGENCE BE SURE THAT THEIR MAN *WOULD* BE ACCEPTED BY US?

THEY TOOK THE IDENTITY OF A SOUTH AFRICAN CAPTAIN KILLED AT TOBRUK! THEY KNEW WE COULDN'T CHECK BECAUSE THE WHOLE REGIMENT WAS WIPED OUT!



THE COMMANDOS WERE A YOUNG FORCE. BUT FROM OPERATION TASKMASTER THEY HAD LEARNED ONE THING... THEY MUST BE BACKED UP BY METICULOUS INTELLIGENCE.



FROM THOSE EARLY BEGINNINGS THE COMMANDOS WERE FORGED INTO A SUPERB FORCE OF FIGHTING MEN THAT HIT THE ENEMY MANY STUNNING BLOWS THROUGHOUT THE REST OF THE WAR...

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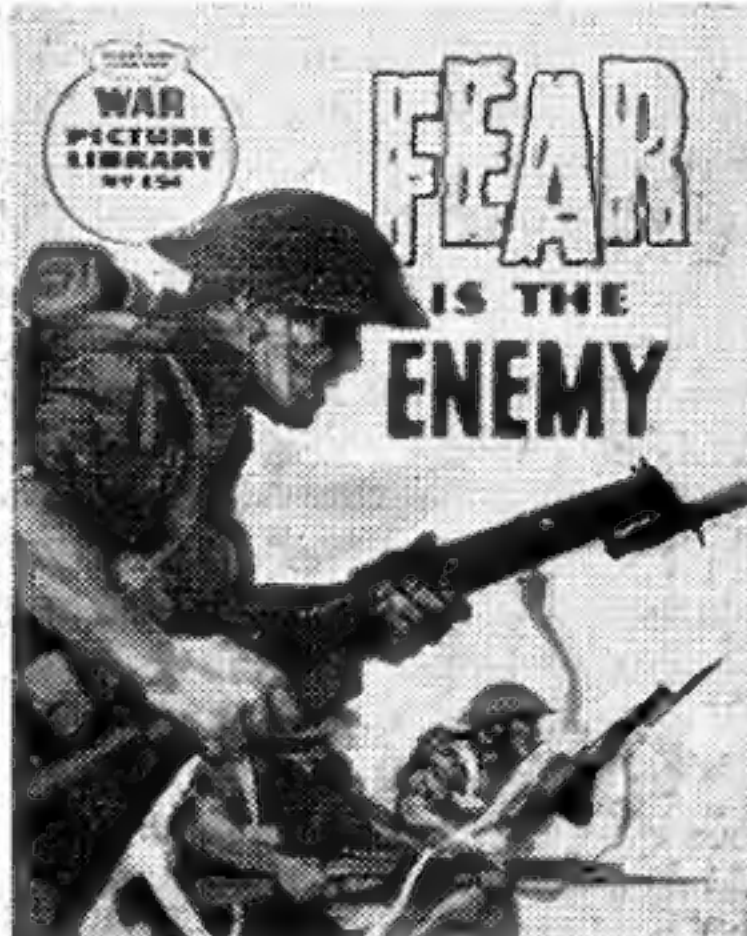
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